

CHAPTER

XIV. 1808.

The Spanish troops in Hamburg — Romana's siesta — His departure for Funen — Celebration of Napoleon's birthday — Romana's defection — English agents and the Dutch troops — Facility of communication between England and the Continent — Delay of couriers from Russia — Alarm and complaints — The people of Hamburg — Montesquieu and the Minister of the Grand Duke of Tuscany — Invitations at six months — Napoleon's journey to Italy — Adoption of Eugene — Lucien's daughter and the Prince of the Asturias — M. Auguste de StaëPs interview with Napoleon.

PREVIOUS to the interview at Erfurt an event took place which created a strong interest in Hamburg and throughout Europe, an event which was planned and executed with inconceivable secrecy. I allude to the defection of the Marquis de la Romana, which I have not hitherto noticed, in order that T might not separate the different facts which came to my knowledge respecting that defection and the circumstances which accompanied it.

The Marquis de la Romana had come to the Hanse Towns at the head of an army corps of 18,000 men, which the Emperor in the preceding campaign claimed in virtue of treaties previously concluded with the Spanish Government. The Spanish troops at first met with a good reception in the Hanse Towns. The difference of language, indeed, occasionally caused discord, but when better acquainted the inhabitants and their visitors became good friends. The Marquis de la Romana was a little swarthy man, of unprepossessing and rather common appearance ; but he had a considerable share of talent and information. He had travelled in almost every part of Europe, and as he had been a close observer of all he saw his conversation was exceedingly agreeable and instructive.

During his stay at Hamburg General Romana spent almost every evening at my house, and invariably fell asleep over a game at whist. Madame de Bourrienne was usually his part-